

“MEET ME” STYLE TELEPHONE HEARINGS

In order to greatly expedite the telephone hearing process for all concerned, and based on successful implementation in other courts, this court is testing the “Meet Me” style procedure. In short, the court will not initiate calls to the parties for this style telephone hearing. Instead, NOT LATER THAN the time scheduled for the hearing, EACH PARTY MUST call AND CONNECT to a designated telephone number AND comply with EACH requirement listed below. This creates a “virtual courtroom” where all participants in all hearings scheduled for a given time call into one telephone line, or may physically appear in the courtroom, and simply listen until their particular hearing is called. The court will start testing “Meet Me” style hearings with Portland judges’ relief from stay motions, discharge hearings, and possibly pre-trials.

THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO “MEET ME” STYLE HEARINGS:

1. **EACH PARTY MUST, NOT LATER THAN the time set for hearing, EITHER call AND CONNECT to (509) 353-3187, or physically appear in the judge’s courtroom.** The court will NOT initiate calls to the parties for this telephone hearing. [IMPORTANT NOTES: (a) Do NOT call more than 5 minutes before this hearing or you may not connect and the phone will just ring; (b) if the line is busy, keep trying until you connect; (c) there will be NO greeting until the judge appears; AND (d) THIS IS NOT an Area Code “503” number so, subject to point 6, use the least expensive telephone service (e.g., “10 + 10”).]
2. Parties must NOT introduce themselves until the court calls their specific hearing. They must simply stay on the line through the silence prior to the judge’s appearance, and then listen quietly until their hearing is called.
3. If a participant calls in late, the judge will handle the late appearance the same as (s)he would a late appearance in court. If the case has already been called, the judge will likely decline to revisit any decision that was made when the case was called. Failure of a movant/plaintiff to appear at the scheduled time may result in denial of the relief requested or dismissal of the matter for failure to prosecute. Failure of a respondent/defendant to appear at the scheduled time may result in a default order being entered against that party.
4. Whenever speaking, parties must first identify themselves.
5. Each party must take all necessary steps to eliminate background noise such as shutting the door, turning off background music, not talking to third parties, using a “Do Not Disturb” button so the telephone/intercom will not ring, positioning the telephone to minimize paper rustling, and keeping all nonparticipants in the room quiet.
6. Use of a speaker or “cell” phone is discouraged. A party may be asked to call from another telephone if it causes static or has excessive background noise, etc., or the signal is weak or drops because of location.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Clerk, U.S. Bankruptcy Court